University College Dublin

Periodic Quality Review

UCD School of Politics & International Relations

April 2014

Accepted by the UCD Governing Authority at its meeting on 17 June 2014

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1. Introduction and Overview of UCD School of Politics and International Relations

Introduction

1.1   This Report presents the findings of a quality review of the School of Politics and International Relations, University College Dublin, which was undertaken on 8-11 April 2014. The School response to the Review Group Report is attached as Appendix 1.

The Review Process

1.2   Irish Universities have collectively agreed a framework for their quality review and quality improvement systems, which is consistent with both the legislative requirements of the Universities Act 1997, and international good practice (e.g. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2007). Quality reviews are carried out in academic, administrative and support service units.

1.3   The purpose of periodic review is to assist the University to assure itself of the quality of each of its constituent units, and to utilise learning from this essentially developmental process in order to effect improvement, including :

- To monitor the quality of the student experience, and of teaching and learning opportunities

- To monitor research activity, including: management of research activity; assessing the research performance with regard to: research productivity, research income, and recruiting and supporting doctoral students.

- To provide an opportunity for units to test the effectiveness of their systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing quality and standards

- To provide a framework within which the unit can continue to work in the future towards quality improvement

- To identify shortfalls in resources and provide an externally validated case for change and/or increased resources

- To identify, encourage and disseminate good practice

- To identify challenges and address these

- To provide public information on the University's capacity to assure the quality and standards of its awards. The University's implementation of its quality review procedures also enables it to demonstrate how it discharges its responsibilities for assuring the quality and standards of its awards, as required by the Universities Act 1997.

1.4 Typically, the review model comprises four major elements:

- Preparation of a self-assessment report (SAR)

- A visit by a review group (RG) that includes UCD staff and external experts, both national and international. The site visit normally will take place over a two or three day period

- Preparation of a review group report that is made public

- Agreement of an action plan for improvement (quality improvement plan) based on the RG report's recommendations. The University will also monitor progress against the improvement plan

Full details of the review process can be found on the UCD Quality Office website: www.ucd.ie/quality.

1.5 The composition of the Review Group for the UCD School of Politics and International Relations was as follows:

- Dr Gethin McBean, UCD School of Biomolecular and Biomedical Science (Chair)

- Dr Aoife Ahern, UCD School of Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering (Deputy Chair)

- Professor Layna Mosley, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA (Extern)

- Professor Christopher Hill, University of Cambridge, UK (Extern)

1.6 The Review Group visited the School from 8-11 April 2014 and held meetings with School staff; undergraduate and postgraduate students; the SAR Co-ordinating Committee; other University staff, including the College Principal, and external stakeholders. The site visit schedule is included as Appendix 2.

1.7 In addition to the Self-assessment Report, the Review Group considered documentation provided by the School and the University during the site visit. A notable feature was the use of Case Studies to introduce the School's activities to the Review Group. The Review Group found this to be an informative and useful way of presenting the range of activities within the School, however, it would have been more valuable to the Review Group if the number of Case Studies had been reduced.

Preparation of the Self-assessment Report (SAR)

1.8   Following a briefing from the UCD Quality Officer in March 2013, a Self-assessment Report Coordinating Committee (SARCC) was put in place. Members of the SAR coordinating committee drafted relevant sections of the report and they sought input from relevant staff members and students throughout. Committee membership and responsibility for Report chapters are set out below:

Member	Position	Responsibility
Prof. Patrick Paul Walsh	Professor of International Development Studies; Director of PhD in Global Human Development; Chair of the TCD-UCD Masters in Development Practice; Periodic Quality Review Co-ordinator (Chair)	Chair of SARCC Chapters 7, 9
Dr Sam Brazys	Lecturer; Chair of School Research Committee; MA/MSc Co-ordinator: International Political Economy	Chapter 6
Ms Yuko Conlon	Administrator, Graduate School Human Sciences; Collaborative Graduate Programmes Assistant	
Dr Vincent Durac	Lecturer; Chair of School Teaching & Learning Committee; Staff-Student Liaison	Chapters 4.1, 5
Ms Dara Gannon	Administrator, SPIRe School Manager; PhD Administrator; Manager, Institute for British-Irish Studies (IBIS)	
Dr Niamh Hardiman	Senior Lecturer; Chair of Graduate Studies Committee; MA/MSc Co-ordinator: Politics	Chapters 4.2, 4.3, 8
Mr Ciarán O'Driscoll	PhD student and Graduate Teaching Assistant	
Prof. Ben Tonra	Head of School; Jean Monnet Professor of European Foreign Security and Defence Policy and Associate Professor of International Relations; Disability Access; Library Liaison	Chapters 1, 2, 3

1.9   The Coordinating Committee met six times in the period October 2013 to March 2014. In preparation for the review, several facilitated formal all-School SWOT analyses were conducted: the first on teaching and learning (facilitated by UCD Teaching and Learning) and

the second as a 'whole of School' analysis (facilitated by the College HR Partner). In addition, the School initiated further SWOT analyses from key local stakeholders: undergraduate students (facilitated by an Occasional Lecturer), graduate taught students and graduate research students (each separately facilitated by the College HR Partner) and teaching assistants (facilitated by UCD Teaching and Learning). The draft report was circulated over three iterations to all School staff for comment and amendment, with the final draft agreed by the Co-ordinating Committee.

The University

1.10   University College Dublin (UCD) is a large and diverse university whose origins date back to 1854. The University is situated on a large modern campus about 4 km to the south of the centre of Dublin.

1.11   The University Strategic Plan (to 2014) states that the University's mission is: "to advance knowledge, to pursue truth and to foster learning, in an atmosphere of discovery, creativity, innovation and excellence, drawing out the best in each student, and contributing to the social, cultural and economic life of Ireland in the wider world".

The University is organised into 38 schools in seven colleges:

- UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies

- UCD College of Human Sciences

- UCD College of Science

- UCD College of Engineering and Architecture

- UCD College of Health Sciences

- UCD College of Business and Law

- UCD College of Agriculture, Food Science and Veterinary Medicine

1.12   As one of the largest universities on the island of Ireland, UCD supports a broad, deep and rich academic community in Science, Business, Engineering, Health Sciences, Agriculture, Veterinary, Arts, Law, Celtic Studies and Human Sciences. There are currently more than 24,000 students in our UCD campus (approximately 15,500 undergraduates, 8,000 postgraduates and 2,000 Occasional and Adult Education students) registered on over 70 University degree programmes, including over 6,100 international students from more than 121 countries. The University also has over 5,400 students studying UCD degree courses on campuses overseas.

UCD School of UCD School of Politics and International Relations (SPIRe)

1.13   The UCD School of Politics and International Relations (SPIRe) was created in 2006 as the result of a merger of the then Department of Politics with the Dublin European Institute and the Centre for Development Studies. The School provides undergraduate teaching to several programmes, most notably the Bachelor of Arts (BA) and the Bachelor of Social Science (BSocSci). The School also contributes modules to the BCL Law with Politics degree. SPIRe undergraduate student FTEs have increased from 307 (2009-10) to 357 (2013-14) and account for 70% of all SPIRe FTEs.

1.14   The School offers a broad range of taught graduate programmes of its own and in partnership with other UCD Schools and international partners. The School also offers a structured PhD programme in Politics and International Relations, as well as partnering with other UCD Schools and national and international partners in graduate research education. In 2013-14, the School had 142 student FTEs on taught masters programmes, of whom 32% were non-EU students, and 29 doctoral students.

1.15   In February 2013 the QS World University Rankings placed UCD in the top 100 Universities in 7 subjects including Politics & International Studies. The School also has had a long history of active engagement with key policy makers, both nationally and internationally, members of the School are actively engaged in civil society networks and public engagement initiatives and school members inform public debate through frequent media contributions (national and international television, radio and print media). The School has a strong research focus and income from research has increased since 2010, with a significant percentage coming from non-exchequer sources.

1.16   The School has lost 5 staff FTEs since 2010 which at 32% was the greatest reduction in full time permanent staff encountered in a single unit and far exceeds the University-wide average of 11% for the same period. Recent appointments at lecturer level have increased academic staff FTEs to 15.3, but there is still a significant shortage of staff. Senior staff (Professor and Associate Professor) account for 27% of academic staff, which is above the University average.

1.17   The School has a student: staff ratio of 33:1, which is considerably higher than the University average of 22:1.

1.18   The School has sustained a significant loss of administrative staff, with the consequence that the remaining 2.1 administrative staff FTEs are barely able to provide appropriate support in face of the increase in undergraduate and postgraduate student numbers.

1.19   Under the University Resource Allocation Model (RAM), SPIRe's budgetary position is positive. However, the School has sustained considerable reductions in its non-pay and 'other staff' (for example, tutors and occasional lecturers) budgets over the last 5 years. The non-pay budget has been reduced by 75%. Likewise, the budget for tutors has been cut by 54%. Consequently the School is under severe financial pressure, particularly in meeting its

obligations to provide tutors to support undergraduate teaching. There is an increasing risk of a reduction in teaching standards.

1.20   The School has made significant efforts to counteract the worsening financial situation. Following a recent internal strategic review, SPIRe has resolved to build on its research strengths and recast itself as a centre of excellence in international politics. In addition, a process is underway to build on its success in recruiting graduate students (both EU and non-EU) and to develop national and international research and policy networks that will impact positively on the ability of staff to attract research funding.

2. Organisation and Management

2.1   The Head of School is appointed for a three-year term on a rotational basis from within the School. He is supported by a School Executive Committee and a School Board. In addition to the Head of School, the Executive Committee comprises the respective directors of graduate studies, research and teaching and learning. The Committee operates as a critical decision-making unit for the Head of School and meets on an *ad hoc* basis.

2.2   All academic and administrative staff are members of the School Board, which typically meets once per semester. A key objective of the meetings of the School Board is to inform all staff of School activities and to provide the opportunity for creative input into policy making.

2.3   The Head of School works closely with the School Manager in the day-to-day management of the School. The School Manager is a half-time (0.5 FTE) post that is shared with the Institute of British and Irish Studies.

Commendations

2.4   There is a high degree of collegiality amongst staff and a willingness to accept the considerable administrative responsibilities that accompany greater class sizes and the increase in the student: staff FTE ratio. The School's cohort of efficient and committed administrative staff is commended for coping as best they can with the reduction in staff number and an increasing workload.

2.5   Notwithstanding the pressure of heavy teaching loads and time dedicated to administrative roles, academic staff are highly committed to maintaining a research-focussed environment.

2.6   The School is commended for having compiled a strategic plan and for taking the decision to promote itself as a centre of excellence in international politics

2.7   The introduction of a workload model that is transparent and takes account of teaching and administrative duties of academic staff has proved successful. The model is used by the HOS in allocation of duties to staff.

Recommendations

2.8   Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee should be taken and a summary of the outcomes of the meeting should be circulated to staff. In addition, the minutes should be retained centrally, so that staff may consult as needed.

2.9   It will be important to engage in succession planning for the major administrative responsibilities taken on by staff, including Head of School, and to ensure that there is a generally shared expectation of the rotation of responsibilities.

2.10   Whilst the level of interaction and collegiality amongst academic staff is high, intra-School communication that includes postgraduate students needs to be improved, for example, by introducing opportunities for social interaction.

2.11   There needs to be greater formalisation of procedures at School level, for example, to ensure transparency in how decisions are made, to provide details of induction process for new staff, to define the level of administrative support for academic staff and to standardise the system for instruction of new tutors across the School. The Review Group noted that new material for tutors relating to some particular modules is now available and recommends that this practice should be adopted by all module co-ordinators.

2.12   The Review Group noted that there seems to be a lack of awareness amongst staff of how FTEs for undergraduate and postgraduate teaching are allocated to the School. This may impact negatively on SPIRe's ability to make a strong case to the College and University for allocation of resources and replacement of staff FTEs. It is recommended that staff meet with the College of Human Sciences finance manager to understand the basis of FTE allocation at all levels (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research) and to build a profile of year-on-year changes in student FTEs.

2.13   The School needs to make the best use of data and to present its case for support in a more structured way. Whilst the Review Group acknowledges that the School has given consideration to how it wishes to develop, it is recommended that the School should compile a more objective and evidence-based strategic plan and identify clear priorities for teaching and research. The School should use the plan to inform the College and University of its priorities and of how these could be achieved. Please also refer to comments in Section 5.8.

3. Staff and Facilities

3.1   Staffing is a major issue for SPIRe, given the impact of both financial entrenchment and departure of some key individuals. The School is effectively understaffed at a complement of 15.3 FTEs. It is thus highly dependent on a larger number of emeriti, postdocs and teaching fellows in order to deal with a steadily rising number of students, particularly at the

undergraduate level. The staff-student ratio of 33:1 is an obvious disadvantage for the School in terms of both its ability to deliver effective teaching outcomes, and the pressure on research time that it represents.

3.2   Given these difficulties the morale of the unit is remarkably high, although in the circumstances this may not last. Most staff seem thoroughly committed to maintaining, and indeed developing, the School's long-standing reputation for the study of Politics and International Relations. The new workload model has been welcomed and apparently bought in to by all staff. While there is a reasonable balance within the School on the indicators of age and gender, there has been a disproportionately large number of professors in the School, even if recent appointments have led to an adjustment here. More important are the blockages to promotion for younger and mid-career staff, and indeed, the lack of a sense of normal career progression.

3.3   Other difficulties for staff consist of the lack of support for research by comparison to other schools of similar standing outside Ireland. Sabbaticals are still granted in principle, but it is clear that without the availability of staff to cover absences they will be difficult to obtain. There is a small amount of funding for conference attendance, but none for research assistants. The small size of the Administrative Office also means that much routine work falls back on academic staff. For their part, administrative staff are under considerable pressure, and have few opportunities to progress their own career unless they leave the School. Feedback from staff and students indicated that the supports provided by Human Resources, IT services, and the Library, leave much to be desired, with the result that it may prove difficult to retain the best staff over the coming years.

Commendations

3.4   The commitment of staff to the success of the School in testing circumstances.

3.5   The ability of many staff members to maintain a good level of research and publishing activity.

3.6   The personally sympathetic approach of senior staff to those newly appointed.

3.7   The cheerfulness and commitment of an understaffed Administrative Office.

3.8   The ability of the School to renew itself to some degree by attracting able young researchers and Teaching Fellows.

Recommendations

3.9   A clear system of mentoring needs to be introduced for younger staff. The current lack of an induction scheme for them should be raised with UCD Human Resources. The requirements and the roadmap towards tenure need to be set out clearly.

3.10   Consideration needs to be given to protecting new members of staff from an excessive workload, at least in the first year.

3.11   If sabbatical leave continues to prove difficult, attention will need to focus more on compressing teaching into one semester so as to allow any given staff member at least one light semester every three years.

3.12   Negotiation should be entered into with the College with an attempt to enlarge the administrative staffing beyond its current compliment of 2.1 FTE.   One full time administrator in a school with this number of students is clearly insufficient. The Review Group heard from several undergraduates that their emails were not answered promptly and in some cases, not at all. Evidence clearly shows that the Office is working hard to keep abreast of a very demanding workload and the Review Group notes that it is inevitable that more gaps will emerge as the workload continues to increase.

4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

4.1   At the undergraduate level, the School provides teaching to several programmes, including the BA and the BSocSci. It offers a wide range of modules (23 in 2013-2014, across two stages), accounting for 357 FTSEs. The decline in the size of the academic staff (from over 25 FTEs in 2009 to 15.3 FTEs in 2014), presents significant challenges in offering modules, engaging students intellectually, and providing students with a quality education.

4.2   In the context of a reduced academic staff, enrolments in modules have grown. While there have been some innovative efforts to engage students in large courses – for instance, through simulations – increased class numbers can affect learning outcomes as well as students' sense of a connection with academic staff.

4.3   The School also offers a range of taught Master's programmes, focused in an array of substantive issues. These programmes are available at a variety of levels (Diploma, MA and MSc), and with part-time and full-time options. The rationale for offering this range of options is that it facilitates recruitment of students with varying backgrounds and professional interests. At the PhD level, SPIRe attracts 6 to 7 students per year; it also participates in three interdisciplinary and inter-School PhD programmes.

Commendations

4.4   The academic staff are committed to high quality teaching. Their research productivity helps to inform this teaching, exposing students to current work across a range of substantive areas and using various methodological approaches.

4.5   Despite staff reductions, increased module sizes and a small budget for tutors, the School remains committed to teaching undergraduates. At Stage 1 and Stage 2, the School continues to use a tutorial model. Doing so helps to provide undergraduates with

opportunities for discussion, essay writing and interactive learning. The recent development of tutor training guides is an excellent step toward ensuring a high-quality tutorial experience for all students; the Review Group hopes that these guides will be created for all modules.

4.6   The School focuses a significant amount – approximately 30 percent -- of its teaching effort at the post-graduate level.

4.7   The PhD programme offers a structure that includes not only methodological but also substantive training. Joint offerings with TCD allow UCD doctoral students to take advantage of the different strengths of staff at TCD. Graduates of the doctoral programme have been hired for academic posts as well as policy positions at a range of institutions, in Ireland, Europe, the United States and beyond.

Recommendations

4.8   Students at all three levels expressed concerns about their sense of connection with the School and the academic staff: they often do not feel an identity as SPIRe/Political Science and International Relations students. This could be remedied by building stronger bonds among students, as well as with academic staff by, *inter alia:*

(a) At the undergraduate level, the Review Group strongly encourages the offering of tutorials in Stage 3 modules; as the School does not have the financial resources for such offerings, the College ought to make funds available, so as not to dilute further the quality of the undergraduate learning experience.

(b) Within the School, academic staff should provide guidance to students on module choice, especially at the end of Stage 1; open office hours at select times could, for instance, provide an opportunity to get advice on academic and career paths.

(c) The Review Group also suggest that the School investigate other means of connecting with its best undergraduate students – for instance, offering a small seminar to select students or involving undergraduates in research activities.

4.9   The Review Group also encourages the School to consider means of increasing interaction among master's and doctoral students; attendance at research seminar presentations is a great start, but other avenues also ought to be explored.

4.10   The School should request that PhD student office space, which is allocated by the College, be organised by discipline – so that political science and international relations students share space with others from their own School.

4.11   In terms of interaction with academic staff, collaborative or co-authored work offers many benefits (mentoring, publications prior to degree completion) to doctoral students. The Review Group urges the School's staff to consider how graduate students might therefore be

involved more directly in their research efforts; providing small amounts of funding via the Research Committee budget is a good beginning. The Review Group also hopes that PhD students will be informed of, and encouraged to apply for, University-level funding for conference travel and presentation.

4.12 The School also should provide better guidance to PhD students in regard to what the Doctoral Studies Panel (DSP) is supposed to do; many students are unaware of how to engage with this body. At the same time, the DSP should provide timely feedback at the transfer point; more generally, the Head of School should provide staff with a clear set of guidelines regarding the duties of supervisors and other members of DSPs.

4.13 At all three levels (undergraduate, masters, doctoral), there is a need for better and earlier training in the use of statistical methods. While learning these methods can be daunting for students without maths backgrounds, they also are very important not only for conducting research, but also for evaluating work in both the policy and the academic sphere. Indeed, the Review Group heard from students at all three levels a plea for statistical training. Students perceive that such training improves not only their ability to evaluate theoretical arguments, but also their employment prospects after degree completion. The Review Group therefore recommends the offering of a module in research methods (research design, statistical methods) at the undergraduate level, ideally in Year 1.

4.14 It is also recommended that master's level students – those interested in policy careers as well as in doctoral studies – should take core courses in research methods. The Review Group acknowledges that this would effectively eliminate the distinction between MA and MSc variants of programmes, but would have the benefit of simplifying the range of courses on offer.

4.15 At the doctoral level, the TCD-taught quantitative methods course draws on TCD's strengths in that area. As such, it should be taught at TCD each year (rather than alternating with UCD). To address concerns about the level at which the TCD course is taught, the School should offer an optional "math boot camp" (a refresher/introductory course, over a few days prior to the start of the first semester) to prepare doctoral students. At the same time, the School should offer a qualitative methods course (perhaps also jointly listed with TCD); this course should be offered in-house, and it should focus not on broad philosophy of social science or research design considerations, but on specific, practical methods (e.g. interviews, archival research, focus groups, ethnography).

4.16 Within undergraduate courses, there is a need for consistency in practices related to module descriptions and tutorial activities. Students should be provided with clear descriptors for each module. At the same time, tutors should be given training in pedagogy, as well as in practical matters such as using the relevant course management software. Module coordinators should ensure that tutor guides are developed and distributed, and that tutors receive materials (recently developed) related to essay writing, feedback, and plagiarism.

4.17   Module coordinators should take responsibility for entering grades into Gradebook. This task should be completed by the academic staff, rather than by the administrative staff.

4.18   Practices related to the hiring of tutors should be transparent and standardised. The Review Group encourages the School to investigate whether its tutorial budget and assignments can be rationalised in a way that would allow greater use of tutorials and tutor attendance at lectures, as well as greater consistency over time. Tutor hiring and assignments should be made annually, rather than each semester.

5. Curriculum Development and Review

5.1   Undergraduate students may take Politics and International Relations through the BA Programme (the primary means), as well as through the BSocSci, the BA Joint Honours Degree, and the BCL (law and politics). Students also may transfer to a single subject degree at the end of the first year. The vast majority of undergraduate modules carry 5 credits that amount to a total of between 10 and 20 credits at Level 1. Single major students take 120 credits at Level 2 and 3, while those taking Politics and International Relations as part of a joint major degree take a total of 60 credits at Levels 2 and 3. The School also offers a range of taught Master's programmes (see 4.3) and a doctoral programme.

Commendations

5.2   Despite pressures emanating from a reduced academic staff, the School continues to provide a range of modules covering a range of areas, and to introduce new courses or revise existing ones.

5.3   The School has acknowledged the need for a systematic review of its curriculum. The Review Group is pleased that this is planned, as many of the Review Group recommendations can be used in that process.

5.4   The annual review of modules, content and evaluation (by the External Examiner) offers regular feedback on the quality of instruction and assessment. Reports from the External Examiner are generally positive; when the Examiner has identified problems – as in the 2011 report, related to variation across modules in grade outcomes – the School has addressed them promptly.

Recommendations

5.5   The Review Group strongly encourages the School to consider in a holistic sense its offerings at the master's level. Offering new programmes provides some benefits, but doing so also generates costs. And not all of the FTEs generated by master's programmes accrue to the School. While the Review Group understands that fee-paying graduate students offer revenue in a time of pronounced fiscal constraints, the Review Group worries that offering such a range (in terms of substance, levels, and structure) of programmes dilutes the brand

identity of these graduate degrees. Indeed, data on actual enrolments suggest that the majority of master's students are concentrated in Development and in International Relations.

5.6   A smaller set of programmes, focused on the core research interests of the School (as identified on p.18 of the SAR), would create a more coherent identity. To this end, the School's 2013 strategic plan document "noted the agreed School objective of recasting it as a centre of excellence in international politics while maintaining its teaching provision in core areas of the discipline such as comparative politics (including Ireland and the EU) and the political theory." (p.26 of SAR). This coherence is useful not only for encouraging connections between teaching and research, but also for improving the prospects of students seeking positions after degree completion and guaranteeing that all taught master's students (regardless of academic background or intended career path) are rigorously trained. Moreover, reducing the number of programme options will reduce confusion among potential master's degree applicants.

5.7   Academic staff, as well as undergraduate students, have expressed concerns about the effects of flattened Level 2 on learning outcomes. Academic staff have not, however, presented this case to the Programme Board. The Review Group is sympathetic to the claim that a flattened Level 2 is undesirable for Politics and International Relations students, and the Review Group encourages the Head and the School to make this claim (supported by data, see 5.8) at the College level.

5.8   In the review documentation and in the Review Group meetings, various claims were made about recent changes in the undergraduate population and in undergraduate learning outcomes. These claims are, thus far, anecdotal in nature. While the data to assess them systematically are available, these data have thus far not been collected or presented. The Review Group strongly recommends the collection of information, for use in curriculum review, on (a) the median qualifications of BA students (to what extent has the CAO points at entry of the median student changed over time?); (b) performance of students over time (to what extent have grades in the same modules, and taught by the same staff, fallen, remained the same, or increased?); and (c) comparisons of grades between Year 2 and Year 3 students in Level 2 modules (to what extent do Year 2 students taking what would be Level 3 modules do worse than their Year 3 colleagues?). The general point is that the data needed to assess claims about student characteristics and outcomes are available and should be consulted; doing so will allow the School to make its claims more forcefully.

5.9   Some graduate students are concerned that they are not trained in writing for an academic audience, or in an analytic style. Given that master's-level students come from a range of disciplinary and national backgrounds, offering early guidance in writing is central. Instruction in and feedback on writing should therefore come very early in the M.A. curriculum.

5.10   The School should ensure that there is consistency in assessment across modules. The requirements, such as the amount of written work for modules should be broadly consistent and regularly monitored.

5.11   Collecting information on graduates, either at the School or College level, would allow the School to track both the career paths and the academic experiences of students. Such surveys could provide a useful complement to course evaluations or surveys of current undergraduate and/or graduate students. Course evaluations tend to have low response rates, and the response rates also vary significantly across modules. Moreover, students may have a better sense of how useful modules were after they have finished their education and entered the workforce or a graduate degree program.

6. Research Activity

6.1   Research activity is high relative to the pressure on academic time. The School contains a number of people with international reputations while most staff publish on a reasonably regular basis. There is however, a considerable variation between the two or three most productive individuals, and the majority, suggesting that the pressures on time coming from increased student numbers and administrative load are having an effect on research outputs. Most staff members are, however, outward looking in terms of their subjects and networks. Research grant income is more than reasonable in the circumstances, although again, this is clustered around a few successful individuals. The School deliberately in the SAR did not break down publications by individuals, which is understandable in light of the need for maintaining morale and recognising the equal value of teaching and administration to research. On the other hand, it is useful for any individual in a unit which values its research reputation to have some benchmark of the level of productivity which would be desirable.

6.2   Unless the appropriate support for research activity can be improved, if only at the margin, there is a likelihood that there will be a falling away of research activity in the School. This means primarily more time to write, administrative help with grant proposals, and some available seed core money and research assistance. The University will need, at a higher level than SPIRe, to decide on its priorities between student numbers and research. Otherwise its staff will find it increasingly difficult to perform in both areas, and some will look for opportunities to move elsewhere. A vicious circle will then be set up where good postgraduates will not be attracted to UCD because of the lack of research stars to supervise. Teaching at the higher levels has to be research-led if Masters and PhD programmes are to thrive.

Commendations

6.3   The Review Group recognises the quality of scholarship evident in the School.

6.4   SPIRe retains a high external reputation, and wishes to improve its position in international research league tables. The revived Research Committee, staffed by younger academics, has some good ideas for working with the limited resources available to engage both staff and PhD students in collaborative activity.

6.5   The School has done well with the award of research grants, and should be in a good position to continue that record with Horizon 2020.

6.6   The engagement of researchers within the School with the world of public policy is excellent. Major contributions have been made to the debate on the reform of Ireland's constitution, and in the areas of human rights and development practice.

6.7   The revival of the Dublin European Institute is to be welcomed. The ability to attract the President of Ireland to its launch event gives a strong signal of its potential, particularly in relation to support from government circles in Ireland. But it should also be a platform for building networks across the EU and applying for funding from the Commission.

6.8   There is a commendable awareness of the need to publicise the School's research and to interact with the wider community with the use of social media.

Recommendations

6.9   Given the paucity of funding, PhD's and indeed staff, need to be encouraged to play a prominent role in Europe based conferences such as University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES), British International Studies Association (BISA), and the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR).

6.10   External examiners and others who visit the University for administrative purposes should be encouraged to address research seminars, i.e. at no extra net cost.

6.11   Visitors to the School from other countries are to be encouraged, but they should also be expected to contribute to the School, for example, by payment of a bench fee, offering a seminar or mentoring graduate students.

6.12   Thought should be given to the possibility of publishing between staff members and PhD students to mutual benefit.

6.13   In the interest of getting more University support for SPIRe, a dialogue should be opened within the School on the way in which the University's major research themes are promoted by the work going on in the School.

6.14   Staff should be required to list on the website at the end of each academic year all the publications in that period and conference presentations delivered.

7. Management of Quality and Enhancement

7.1   There are a number of mechanisms in place at both College and University level by which the School can collect and act upon feedback. These include the module enhancement feedback process, visits by the External Examiner and oversight by Teaching and Learning Committees at School and College level.

Commendations

7.2   The programmes in SPIRe have an excellent reputation outside of UCD. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students are attracted into the programmes due to perceptions of high quality.

7.3   The External Examiner provides constructive feedback. The School clearly reviews the reports of the External Examiner and has acted upon the recommendations made.

7.4   The School is to be commended on the re-vitalisation of the Research Committee and the establishment of research seminars, which allow colleagues to share research outputs and provide feedback to each other on the work being conducted within the School.

Recommendations

7.5   A student-staff committee needs to be established to give students a forum to provide feedback to academic staff. The meetings should take place at least once a semester, with information to the students on what actions are taken as a result of feedback.

7.6   A forum needs to be put in place so that Masters students can engage with staff on issues relating to the course and can voice any concerns they may have.

7.7   A forum should also be put in place for PhD students to air concerns and issues.

8. Support Services

8.1   SPIRe has had a varied experience in relation to its engagement with support services across the University. In some cases, there has been very good, high quality support provided to the School. However, there are a number of areas where the support provided to SPIRe has been limited. SPIRe has a right to expect a basic level of competence from Support Services, which has at times been lacking; for example the failure to send out a PhD thesis to an examiner.

Commendations

8.2   While there have been financial cut-backs and reductions in availability of journals in the Library, the support offered by the Library has been excellent and staff in the Library are very helpful.

8.3   Support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning has been identified as being of very high quality.

8.4   The academic staff members have been very well supported by the excellent administrative staff in place in the School.

Recommendations

8.5   Feedback from staff indicated that the School has experienced a number of issues in relation to different IT systems within UCD (Blackboard, Gradebook, Online registration, for example). It was reported to the Review Group that queries need to be raised by a Head of School before a response is forthcoming – the Review Group is of the opinion that this is inappropriate. Responsiveness of IT services to staff queries and difficulties needs to be improved.

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they commence employment in UCD, providing them with a welcome package outlining the relevant information that they will require when their employment commences. UCD HR should provide clear guidance and all necessary information to support staff in their applications for required visas and work permits before they arrive in Ireland.

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8.12   All newly-appointed staff should expect to receive their contracts in a timely manner and the Review Group recommends that UCD HR review their current procedures to ensure that this happens.

9. External Relations

9.1   The School has reasonably good relations with the College and other Schools within it, but it is notable that there is a general sense of fatalism about the ability to affect decisions taken at higher levels. This is unnecessary, given the importance of SPIRe to the University in terms of the numbers of undergraduates it teaches, and indeed of its research profile. Looking outside UCD, there is evidence of regular contact with TCD, including particularly the Research Training Programme for PhD's. Individual members of staff also have a wide range of personal networks across the world. The School takes in Erasmus students, as well as some Junior Year Abroad from a small number of American universities.

9.2   The School has established significant and valuable relationships with many different outside bodies. These include media organisations, government departments, NGOs, other universities and other UCD Schools.

Commendations

9.3   SPIRe is very active in its level of engagement with outside bodies and with the community in general. The School is very highly regarded by external stakeholders and provides media and government bodies with authoritative and informed statements on current affairs. It is evident that the School sees linking research and current affairs and engaged scholarship as very important parts of its role. There is an outstanding availability of staff for radio and TV appearances.

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9.12   The School should build on its external and international research links to generate consortia that might bid for future Horizon 2020 projects.

10. Summary of Commendations and Recommendations

In summary, the Review Group congratulates the School warmly on its achievements in very difficult circumstances, but recommends that it should engage in objective and evidence-based consideration of the direction in which it wishes to develop. There are significant strengths that

should be consolidated and a need for greater prioritisation, both in teaching and in regard to the research focus that it wishes to present to the University and wider community.

A.   Organisation and Management

Commendations

A.1   There is a high degree of collegiality amongst staff and a willingness to accept the considerable administrative responsibilities that accompany greater class sizes and the increase in the student: staff FTE ratio. The School's cohort of efficient and committed administrative staff is commended for coping as best they can with the reduction in staff number and an increasing workload.

A.2   Notwithstanding the pressure of heavy teaching loads and time dedicated to administrative roles, academic staff are highly committed to maintaining a research-focussed environment.

A.3   The School is commended for having compiled a strategic plan and for taking the decision to promote itself as a centre of excellence in international politics

A.4   The introduction of a workload model that is transparent and takes account of teaching and administrative duties of academic staff has proved successful. The model is used by the HOS in allocation of duties to staff.

Recommendations

A.5   Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee should be taken and a summary of the outcomes of the meeting should be circulated to staff. In addition, the minutes should be retained centrally, so that staff may consult as needed.

A.6   It will be important to engage in succession planning for the major administrative responsibilities taken on by staff, including Head of School, and to ensure that there is a generally shared expectation of the rotation of responsibilities.

A.7   Whilst the level of interaction and collegiality amongst academic staff is high, intra-School communication that includes postgraduate students needs to be improved, for example, by introducing opportunities for social interaction.

A.8   There needs to be greater formalisation of procedures at School level, for example, to ensure transparency in how decisions are made, to provide details of induction process for new staff, to define the level of administrative support for academic staff and to standardise the system for instruction of new tutors across the School. The Review Group noted that new material for tutors relating to some particular modules is now available and recommends that this practice should be adopted by all module co-ordinators.

A.9   The Review Group noted that there seems to be a lack of awareness amongst staff of how FTEs for undergraduate and postgraduate teaching are allocated to the School. This may impact negatively on SPIRe's ability to make a strong case to the College and University for allocation of resources and replacement of staff FTEs. It is recommended that staff meet with the College of Human Sciences finance manager to understand the basis of FTE allocation at all levels (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research) and to build a profile of year-on-year changes in student FTEs.

A.10   The School needs to make the best use of data and to present its case for support in a more structured way. Whilst the Review Group acknowledges that the School has given consideration to how it wishes to develop, it is recommended that the School should compile a more objective and evidence-based strategic plan and identify clear priorities for teaching and research. The School should use the plan to inform the College and University of its priorities and of how these could be achieved. Please also refer to comments in Section 5.8.

B. Staff and Facilities

Commendations

B.1   The commitment of staff to the success of the School in testing circumstances.

B.2   The ability of many staff members to maintain a good level of research and publishing activity.

B.3   The personally sympathetic approach of senior staff to those newly appointed.

B.4   The cheerfulness and commitment of an understaffed Administrative Office.

B.5   The ability of the School to renew itself to some degree by attracting able young researchers and Teaching Fellows.

Recommendations

B.6   A clear system of mentoring needs to be introduced for younger staff. The current lack of an induction scheme for them should be raised with UCD Human Resources. The requirements and the roadmap towards tenure need to be set out clearly.

B.7   Consideration needs to be given to protecting new members of staff from an excessive workload, at least in the first year.

B.8   If sabbatical leave continues to prove difficult, attention will need to focus more on compressing teaching into one semester so as to allow any given staff member at least one light semester every three years.

B.9   Negotiation should be entered into with the College with an attempt to enlarge the administrative staffing beyond its current compliment of 2.1 FTE. One full time administrator in a school with this number of students is clearly insufficient. The Review Group heard from several undergraduates that their emails were not answered promptly and in some cases, not at all. Evidence clearly shows that the Office is working hard to keep abreast of a very demanding workload and the Review Group notes that it is inevitable that more gaps will emerge as the workload continues to increase.

C. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

<u>Commendations</u>

C.1   The academic staff are committed to high quality teaching. Their research productivity helps to inform this teaching, exposing students to current work across a range of substantive areas and using various methodological approaches.

C.2   Despite staff reductions, increased module sizes and a small budget for tutors, the School remains committed to teaching undergraduates. At Stage 1 and Stage 2, the School continues to use a tutorial model. Doing so helps to provide undergraduates with opportunities for discussion, essay writing and interactive learning. The recent development of tutor training guides is an excellent step toward ensuring a high-quality tutorial experience for all students; the Review Group hopes that these guides will be created for all modules.

C.3   The School focuses a significant amount – approximately 30 percent -- of its teaching effort at the post-graduate level.

C.4   The PhD programme offers a structure that includes not only methodological but also substantive training. Joint offerings with TCD allow UCD doctoral students to take advantage of the different strengths of staff at TCD. Graduates of the doctoral programme have been hired for academic posts as well as policy positions at a range of institutions, in Ireland, Europe, the United States and beyond.

<u>Recommendations</u>

C.5   Students at all three levels expressed concerns about their sense of connection with the School and the academic staff: they often do not feel an identity as SPIRe/Political Science and International Relations students. This could be remedied by building stronger bonds among students, as well as with academic staff by, *inter alia:*

   (a) At the undergraduate level, the Review Group strongly encourages the offering of tutorials in Stage 3 modules; as the School does not have the financial resources for such offerings, the College ought to make funds available, so as not to dilute further the quality of the undergraduate learning experience.

(b) Within the School, academic staff should provide guidance to students on module choice, especially at the end of Stage 1; open office hours at select times could, for instance, provide an opportunity to get advice on academic and career paths.

(c) The Review Group also suggest that the School investigate other means of connecting with its best undergraduate students – for instance, offering a small seminar to select students or involving undergraduates in research activities.

C.6　　The Review Group also encourages the School to consider means of increasing interaction among master's and doctoral students; attendance at research seminar presentations is a great start, but other avenues also ought to be explored.

C.7　　The School should request that PhD student office space, which is allocated by the College, be organised by discipline – so that political science and international relations students share space with others from their own School.

C.8　　In terms of interaction with academic staff, collaborative or co-authored work offers many benefits (mentoring, publications prior to degree completion) to doctoral students. The Review Group urges the School's staff to consider how graduate students might therefore be involved more directly in their research efforts; providing small amounts of funding via the Research Committee budget is a good beginning. The Review Group also hopes that PhD students will be informed of, and encouraged to apply for, University-level funding for conference travel and presentation.

C.9　　The School also should provide better guidance to PhD students in regard to what the Doctoral Studies Panel (DSP) is supposed to do; many students are unaware of how to engage with this body. At the same time, the DSP should provide timely feedback at the transfer point; more generally, the Head of School should provide staff with a clear set of guidelines regarding the duties of supervisors and other members of DSPs.

C.10　　At all three levels (undergraduate, masters, doctoral), there is a need for better and earlier training in the use of statistical methods. While learning these methods can be daunting for students without maths backgrounds, they also are very important not only for conducting research, but also for evaluating work in both the policy and the academic sphere. Indeed, the Review Group heard from students at all three levels a plea for statistical training. Students perceive that such training improves not only their ability to evaluate theoretical arguments, but also their employment prospects after degree completion. The Review Group therefore recommends the offering of a module in research methods (research design, statistical methods) at the undergraduate level, ideally in Year 1.

C.11　　It is also recommended that master's level students – those interested in policy careers as well as in doctoral studies – should take core courses in research methods. The Review Group acknowledges that this would effectively eliminate the distinction between MA and MSc variants of programmes, but would have the benefit of simplifying the range of courses on offer.

C.12   At the doctoral level, the TCD-taught quantitative methods course draws on TCD's strengths in that area. As such, it should be taught at TCD each year (rather than alternating with UCD). To address concerns about the level at which the TCD course is taught, the School should offer an optional "math boot camp" (a refresher/introductory course, over a few days prior to the start of the first semester) to prepare doctoral students. At the same time, the School should offer a qualitative methods course (perhaps also jointly listed with TCD); this course should be offered in-house, and it should focus not on broad philosophy of social science or research design considerations, but on specific, practical methods (e.g. interviews, archival research, focus groups, ethnography).

C.13   Within undergraduate courses, there is a need for consistency in practices related to module descriptions and tutorial activities. Students should be provided with clear descriptors for each module. At the same time, tutors should be given training in pedagogy, as well as in practical matters such as using the relevant course management software. Module coordinators should ensure that tutor guides are developed and distributed, and that tutors receive materials (recently developed) related to essay writing, feedback, and plagiarism.

C.14   Module coordinators should take responsibility for entering grades into Gradebook. This task should be completed by the academic staff, rather than by the administrative staff.

C.15   Practices related to the hiring of tutors should be transparent and standardised. The Review Group encourages the School to investigate whether its tutorial budget and assignments can be rationalised in a way that would allow greater use of tutorials and tutor attendance at lectures, as well as greater consistency over time. Tutor hiring and assignments should be made annually, rather than each semester.

D. Curriculum Development and Review

Commendations

D.1   Despite pressures emanating from a reduced academic staff, the School continues to provide a range of modules covering a range of areas, and to introduce new courses or revise existing ones.

D.2   The School has acknowledged the need for a systematic review of its curriculum. The Review Group is pleased that this is planned, as many of the Review Group recommendations can be used in that process.

D.3   The annual review of modules, content and evaluation (by the External Examiner) offers regular feedback on the quality of instruction and assessment. Reports from the External Examiner are generally positive; when the Examiner has identified problems – as in the 2011 report, related to variation across modules in grade outcomes – the School has addressed them promptly.

D.4   The Review Group strongly encourages the School to consider in a holistic sense its offerings at the master's level. Offering new programmes provides some benefits, but doing so also generates costs. And not all of the FTEs generated by master's programmes accrue to the School. While the Review Group understands that fee-paying graduate students offer revenue in a time of pronounced fiscal constraints, the Review Group worries that offering such a range (in terms of substance, levels, and structure) of programmes dilutes the brand identity of these graduate degrees. Indeed, data on actual enrolments suggest that the majority of master's students are concentrated in Development and in International Relations.

D.5   A smaller set of programmes, focused on the core research interests of the School (as identified on p.18 of the SAR), would create a more coherent identity. To this end, the School's 2013 strategic plan document "noted the agreed School objective of recasting it as a centre of excellence in international politics while maintaining its teaching provision in core areas of the discipline such as comparative politics (including Ireland and the EU) and the political theory." (p.26 of SAR). This coherence is useful not only for encouraging connections between teaching and research, but also for improving the prospects of students seeking positions after degree completion and guaranteeing that all taught master's students (regardless of academic background or intended career path) are rigorously trained. Moreover, reducing the number of programme options will reduce confusion among potential master's degree applicants.

D.6   Academic staff, as well as undergraduate students, have expressed concerns about the effects of flattened Level 2 on learning outcomes. Academic staff have not, however, presented this case to the Programme Board. The Review Group is sympathetic to the claim that a flattened Level 2 is undesirable for Politics and International Relations students, and the Review Group encourages the Head and the School to make this claim (supported by data, see 5.8) at the College level.

D.7   In the review documentation and in the Review Group meetings, various claims were made about recent changes in the undergraduate population and in undergraduate learning outcomes. These claims are, thus far, anecdotal in nature. While the data to assess them systematically are available, these data have thus far not been collected or presented. The Review Group strongly recommends the collection of information, for use in curriculum review, on (a) the median qualifications of BA students (to what extent has the CAO points at entry of the median student changed over time?); (b) performance of students over time (to what extent have grades in the same modules, and taught by the same staff, fallen, remained the same, or increased?); and (c) comparisons of grades between Year 2 and Year 3 students in Level 2 modules (to what extent do Year 2 students taking what would be Level 3 modules do worse than their Year 3 colleagues?). The general point is that the data needed to assess claims about student characteristics and outcomes are available and should be consulted; doing so will allow the School to make its claims more forcefully.

D.8   Some graduate students are concerned that they are not trained in writing for an academic audience, or in an analytic style. Given that master's-level students come from a range of disciplinary and national backgrounds, offering early guidance in writing is central. Instruction in and feedback on writing should therefore come very early in the M.A. curriculum.

D.9   The School should ensure that there is consistency in assessment across modules. The requirements, such as the amount of written work for modules should be broadly consistent and regularly monitored.

D.10   Collecting information on graduates, either at the School or College level, would allow the School to track both the career paths and the academic experiences of students. Such surveys could provide a useful complement to course evaluations or surveys of current undergraduate and/or graduate students. Course evaluations tend to have low response rates, and the response rates also vary significant across modules. Moreover, students may have a better sense of how useful modules were after they have finished their education and entered the workforce or a graduate degree program.

E. Research Activity

<u>Commendations</u>

E.1   The Review Group recognises the quality of scholarship evident in the School.

E.2   SPIRe retains a high external reputation, and wishes to improve its position in international research league tables. The revived Research Committee, staffed by younger academics, has some good ideas for working with the limited resources available to engage both staff and PhD students in collaborative activity.

E.3   The School has done well with the award of research grants, and should be in a good position to continue that record with Horizon 2020.

E.4   The engagement of researchers within the School with the world of public policy is excellent. Major contributions have been made to the debate to the reform of Ireland's constitution, and in the areas of human rights and development practice.

E.5   The revival of the Dublin European Institute is to be welcomed. The ability to attract the President of Ireland to its launch event gives a strong signal of its potential, particularly in relation to support from government circles in Ireland. But it should also be a platform for building networks across the EU and applying for funding from the Commission.

E.6   There is a commendable awareness of the need to publicise the School's research and to interact with the wider community with the use of social media.

E.7   Given the paucity of funding, PhD's and indeed staff, need to be encouraged to play a prominent role in Europe based conferences such as University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES), British International Studies Association (BISA), and the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR).

E.8   External examiners and others who visit the University for administrative purposes should be encouraged to address research seminars, i.e. at no extra net cost.

E.9   Visitors to the School from other countries are to be encouraged, but they should also be expected to contribute to the School, for example, by payment of a bench fee, offering a seminar or mentoring graduate students.

E.10   Thought should be given to the possibility of publishing between staff members and PhD students to mutual benefit.

E.11   In the interest of getting more University support for SPIRe, a dialogue should be opened within the School on the way in which the University's major research themes are promoted by the work going on in the School.

E.12   Staff should be required to list on the website at the end of each academic year all the publications in that period and conference presentations delivered.

F. Management of Quality and Enhancement

Commendations

F.1   The programmes in SPIRe have an excellent reputation outside of UCD. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students are attracted into the programmes due to perceptions of high quality.

F.2   The External Examiner provides constructive feedback. The School clearly reviews the reports of the External Examiner and has acted upon the recommendations made.

F.3   The School is to be commended on the re-vitalisation of the Research Committee and the establishment of research seminars, which allow colleagues to share research outputs and provide feedback to each other on the work being conducted within the School.

Recommendations

F.4   A student-staff committee needs to be established to give students a forum to provide feedback to academic staff. The meetings should take place at least once a semester, with information to the students on what actions are taken as a result of feedback.

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<u>Recommendations</u>

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APPENDIX 1

UCD School of Politics and International Relations Response to the Review Group Report

The UCD School of Politics and International Relations (SPIRe) has found the Internal Quality Review to be a useful and constructive process overall. As a reflective exercise, the Self-assessment prompted us to consider and record the scope of our teaching and research activity, and to identify areas of good practice as well as aspects requiring attention.

The Site Visit was helpful in further exploring with the Review Group the ways in which we deliver our programmes and support our students and staff. We would like to thank the Review Group for their considerable efforts during the Site Visit and in compiling the Review Group Report.

The School's Self-assessment Report, the Review Group Report and the Quality Improvement Plan will all be used to inform the School's academic and resource planning activities for the next strategic period.

Finally, we would like to endorse the Review Group commendation of the dedication, commitment and hard work of all categories of staff within the UCD School of Politics and International Relations. This staff enthusiasm is essential to maintaining and further improving the School's commitment to excellence and quality.

Quality Review Visit Timetable

UCD School of Politics and International Relations (SPIRe)
8-11 April 2014

Pre-Visit Briefing Prior to Site Visit
Tuesday, 8th April

17.00-18.45   Review Group meet in the hotel to review preliminary issues and to confirm work schedule and assignment of tasks for the following two days

19.30   Dinner for the Review Group hosted by the UCD Registrar and Deputy President

Day 1: Wednesday, 9th April
Venue: Room G316, Newman Building

09.00-09.30   Private meeting of Review Group (RG)

09.30 –10.15   RG meet with **Head of School**, **School Executive** and **SAR Coordinating Committee**

10.15-10.30   Break

10.30 – 11.15   RG meet with **Case Studies representatives**

11.15 – 11.30   Tea/Coffee Break

11.30 – 12.15   RG meet with **College Principal**

12.15-12.45   Break – RG review key observations and prepare for lunch time meeting

12.45-13.45   **Working lunch (buffet)** – meeting with external stakeholders

13.45-14.15   RG review key observations

14.15-15.30	RG meet with **representative group of academic staff** – primary focus on Teaching and Learning, and Curriculum issues
15.30-15.45	RG tea/coffee break
15.45-16.30	RG meet with **support staff representatives** (e.g. administrative / technical etc)
16.30-16.45	Break
16.45-17.15	RG meet **UCD Dean of Social Science, Programme Manager and BA Degree Programme Manager: Arts and Humanities**
17.15-17.25	Break
17.25-18.00	RG meet **Case Study Representatives**
18.00	Tour of facilities
18.15	RG depart

Day 2: Thursday, 10th April
Venue: Room G316, Newman Building

08.45-09.15	Private meeting of the RG
09.15-09.40	RG meet **Case Study Representatives**
09.40-09.45	Break
09.45-10.10	RG meet **Senior SPIRe staff**
10.10-10.15	Break
10.15-11.00	Over coffee, RG meet with a representative group of **postgraduate students** (taught and research) **and recent graduates** (PG and UG)
11.00-11.15	Break
11.15-12.15	RG meet with the **School Research Committee** (and other staff members nominated by the HoS)
12.15-12.30	Break - RG review key observations
12.30-13.15	Lunch – Review Group only

13.15-14.00	RG meet with **representative group of undergraduate students <u>in Room G317</u>**
14.00-14.15	RG private meeting - review key observations
14.15-15.00	RG meet with **College Finance Manager, Head of School and School Manager** to outline School's financial situation
15.00-15.30	Tea/Coffee Break
15.30-16.10	RG meet with **recently appointed members of staff**
16.10-16.15	Break
16.15-16.25	RG available for private individual meetings with staff
16.25-16.30	Break
16.30-17.00	RG meet with Head of School
17.00-17.30	RG private meeting – review key observations/findings
17.30	RG depart

Day 3: Friday, 11th April
Venue: Room G316, Newman Building

09.00-09.30	Private meeting of RG
09.30-10.30	RG begin preparing draft RG Report
10.30-10.45	Break
10.45-12.30	RG continue preparing draft RG Report
12.30-13.15	Lunch
13.15-15.30	RG finalise first draft of RG Report and feedback commendations/recommendations
15.30-15.45	Break
15.45-16.00	RG meet with **Head of School** to feedback initial outline commendations and recommendations

16.15   **Exit presentation** to <u>all available staff of the unit</u> – made by an extern member of the Review Group summarising the principal commendations/recommendations of the Review Group

16.45   Review Group depart